

Rivers Storytelling

#3 Getting local media and
opinion workshop



What we'll cover this session

1. What makes opinion?
2. Opinion vs news
3. Getting local media
4. Workshopping your stories
5. Next steps

1. What makes opinion?

What makes opinion?

- It's commentary on the news, not news
- It's topical
- It can generate debate
- It's controversial or contrarian
- It taps into the mood and asks a question people are thinking
- BE BOLD OR DON'T BOTHER. This isn't the place for equivocation – say it's the biggest, best, unprecedented

5 questions editors ask

- **Newness:** How is this different?
- **Impact:** Why should readers care?
- **Timeliness:** Why now, not later?
- **Authority:** Why you? (Expertise or personal experience)
- **Ease:** Can this person deliver clean copy?

2. Opinion vs news

Opinion vs news

- News is **something that has just happened**. It's concerned with WHAT. It has a neutral tone.
- Opinion is **commentary or analysis on the thing that has happened**. It asks other questions – especially WHY? It can have other tones: angry, sad, funny etc.

3. Getting local media

What makes the news

Timeliness - It's called news for a reason.

Proximity - The further from the audience the incident takes place, the more dramatic it needs to be.

Conflicts and controversies are interesting, because they allow us to consider different points of view.

Human Interest - People are endlessly interested in other people.

Relevance - People are interested in information that helps them make good decisions.

Elements of a story

- Something new – analysis, report release, govt announcement. May include some data.
- Profile – someone affected by it. Case study, photo, interview.
- Reaction – experts say what it means.
- Political impact/call to action - people involved are asking the government to do X.

Local media tips

- Focus on what it means for the area
- Include photo opportunity
- Write the media release as if it were the article
- Pitch over the phone if you can
- Guide to local media: <https://environmentvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/EV-local-media-guide-FINAL-2.pdf>

4. Workshopping stories

Workshopping stories

- What you like first
- What you think the main point is
- What could improve it, especially the news values – is it timely? Local? Controversy/conflict? Human interest?
- If it's your story, wait for feedback

5. Next steps

Next steps

- Fill out spreadsheet with lists of stories: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xF9Db9Iin7Njf6kOUwIIIT5PooHNNt4DRPC-JjVHdM/edit#gid=0>
- Submit opinion pieces by 11 Jan to t.rotche@environmentvictoria.org.au Greg will give feedback in January
- Request of media contacts – which outlets? EV will provide

Thanks for coming!